

-- ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A hydrophilic polymer with improved biodegradability and particular usefulness in detergent compositions contains units derived by polymerization from at least one monomer A bearing a carboxylic acid function or an equivalent function, units derived by polymerization from at least one monomer B bearing an electron-rich group or a function capable of introducing an electron-rich group into the main chain, and, optionally, units derived by polymerization from at least one monomer C which is copolymerizable with A and B, but is different from A and B. Examples of suitable monomers as monomer A include maleic anhydride, acrylic acid, methacrylic acid, itaconic acid, fumaric acid and maleic acid, and the salts thereof. Examples of suitable monomers as monomer B include butadiene, isoprene, chloroprene, dimethylbutadiene, cyclohexadiene, butadienecarboxylic acid, butadienedicarboxylic acid, acetylene, acetylenecarboxylic acid and acetylenedicarboxylic acid. Suitable monomers as monomer C include vinyl, acrylic and styrene monomers and derivatives thereof. --